

WASHINGTON - Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (IL-05) offered an amendment to the Domestic Energy and Jobs Act (H.R. 4480) mandating stronger consideration of environmental impact and protection before drilling for oil and gas in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS).

“We have to learn from past environmental disasters and prioritize conservation over the profits of big oil companies,” **said Rep. Quigley.** “Congress failed to act on any of the recommendations made by the presidential commission that investigated the Gulf Coast BP oil spill and received a ‘D’ grade by the commission this past April. My legislation allows us to act now and take the necessary precautions to protect our natural resources.”

Rep. Quigley’s legislation amends current OCS policy to clarify that the protection of ocean ecosystems is of primary importance and makes clear that exploration and development of the OCS will be authorized only when scientific research shows that activities can proceed with minimal risk to the health of ocean ecosystems. The amendment makes clear that protection and maintenance – and where appropriate, restoration – of ocean ecosystems and coastal environment is paramount to extraction.

Further, Rep. Quigley’s legislation amends the Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act to take into account distinct areas and environments within the OCS. It calls for specific precautions for OCS exploration in ecosystems that provide habitats for endangered species, include a high diversity of marine and aquatic life, and areas that play critical roles in species’ feeding and migratory patterns.

Rep. Quigley’s legislation, which mirrors the [Protect Our Oceans Act](#) that he introduced in 2010, is supported by Earthjustice, Ocean Conservancy, the Natural Resources Defense Council, the Sierra Club and The Wilderness Society.

Rep. Quigley is serving his second term in the House of Representatives, where he has been a stalwart supporter of environmental protections and oil dependency reduction. In March he spoke out on [rising gas prices and the cost of foreign oil](#) and earlier this year he [offered an amendment provide greater disclosure and transparency](#) before the construction of oil and gas pipelines. In 2011, Rep. Quigley reiterated his [support for strong EPA regulation authority and protection of public health](#)

by voting against anti-regulatory, anti-environment legislation.

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